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A PIONEER
of FREEDOM

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE ILLI-
NOIS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
AT SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

By
GEORGE A. LAWRENCE



A Pioneer of Freedom

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE FOURTEENTH
ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

UPON THE LIFE AND SERVICES
OF BENJAMIN LUNDY

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE CHAMBER AT
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 15, 1913

BY
GEORGE A. LAWRENCE

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UPON THE LIFE AND SERVICES OF BENJAMIN LUNDY

BY GEORGE A. LAWRENCE

“By Nebo’s lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan’s wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab,
There lies a lonely grave.
But no man dug that sepulcher
And no man saw it e’er,
For the angels of God upturned the sod
And laid the dead man there.”

These beautiful lines of Mrs. Alexander’s were written of a prophet and pioneer of the far away years; of the man divinely appointed to become the leader of the chosen people; of a man who left behind him all that was alluring in life—wealth, almost kingly power, and a possible life of ease—to undertake the forty years’ wandering in the wilderness, to endure the complaints and seditions of those he served, and to meet his death without having entered the promised land, to the very verge of which he brought his followers.

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I am privileged to present to you to-night the story of a man which in many respects parallels the career of Moses; of a man who is sepulchered to-day not upon a "lonely mountain," but upon a hill-top on the banks of Clear Creek, in Putnam County, Illinois. Appreciative nature has covered that sepulcher deep with myrtle, and upon the simple stone which marks the resting place are graven these words:

"BENJAMIN LUNDY,
Died August 22, 1839,
Age, 50 years, 7 months, 18 days."

Buried in that lonely spot far away from the tumult, toil and struggle of life, there is nothing in name or environment to suggest the character, the achievements, or the deserved fame of the man who lies buried there. Yet he was to his generation a second Moses. Chosen to lead a people out of bondage, for more than twenty-five years he also wandered in the wilderness, leading what seemed to be a forlorn hope. He also died ere his hopes were realized, but he had vitalized agencies that would soon bring those for whom he had struggled into the promised land. In that lowly grave to-day rests one whose heroic life, loyal service, and sacri-

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vice almost divine, ought to be emblazoned upon the pages of human history. He lived a life of quietude and peace, but he set in motion forces for human liberty and human fellowship that resulted in the freedom of a race.

In obedience to your most kind invitation, I wish to bring to you, as far as my time will allow, something of this man.

Shall we not first profitably inquire into his times, and the day and generation in which he lived and which he served?

The period from 1800 to 1830 may well be called, in discussing the question of human slavery, a period of stagnation. Slavery, introduced into Virginia in 1619, had fastened itself upon the country, North and South alike. In the North, however, the slaves were used only for domestic purposes, and being the source of neither pleasure nor profit they soon ceased to be a factor in its domestic or political economy. In the South, on the contrary, the milder climate, contributing as it did to the lassitude of the white population, became a fitting environment for the negro.

Yet even there for a century and a half the slave had no special economic significance, and above all, was not a source of any great profit.

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The Declaration of Independence, and the formal assertion by the thirteen colonies of the rights of man, affected in a great measure the status of the slave, for those sturdy ancestors of ours were logicians as well as patriots. In 1783 slavery was judicially abolished in Massachusetts, and the ordinance of 1787 for the government of the Northwest Territory was another long step forward in the direction of its general abolition. A great world movement, begun in 1794, ended slavery in the French West Indies and several South American Republics, terminating in a similar result in Mexico in 1829, and in the British West Indies in 1833 by Act of Parliament. Slavery had, prior to the Revolution in this country, been suffered without comment, rather than endorsed or especially contended for. In the state of New York the first active opposition to it was the organization of anti-slavery societies under the presidency of John Jay in 1785. Two years afterwards Benjamin Franklin led an abolition society in Philadelphia. From that time for a number of years these societies multiplied in both North and South. *Abolition* was in the air, *Slavery* in contempt and disgrace. These were the days of the passage of the Ordinance of 1787, the creation of the Mason and Dixon line and the

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abolishment, by other nations, of the slave trade. With its destruction our forefathers hoped that slavery itself would die, and were well content to rest upon their laurels. Our most eminent statesmen from all sections of the country, irrespective of political affiliations, were as apt to be abolitionists in some form or other as to favor slavery. No one was more outspoken in behalf of equal rights than Thomas Jefferson, the leading character of the slave territory in his day. In fact, many of the southern enactments concerning the slave and slavery were decidedly humanitarian in their tendencies, restraining manumission in a measure by an insistence upon the future support of those who were to be freed. In a general way it may be said that the slave power at that time was that of a giant conscious of his own invulnerability. It did not fear discussion, and did not condemn those opposed to it. The anti-slavery sentiments of leading men, of Randolph, Jefferson, Mason, Nicholas, made no impression whatever upon this autocratic power, ruling as it saw fit for its own interest. Complacent when it saw but little to contend for, with no pro-slavery or anti-slavery sentiment, it offered no obstruction to anti-slavery societies in North Carolina, Virginia and Tennes-

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see, fifteen years later. These moral forces were scarce noted in the enormous development of the cotton interest that took place in the early part of the Nineteenth Century. In 1794 the invention of the cotton gin by Whitney revolutionized the status of the slave as affecting the industry of the Southern States. Hitherto slavery and negroes had been but a poor investment to the planter, growing out of idle habits and haphazard methods. Had there been no cotton culture, and no cotton gin to make the business active and profitable, it is probable that slavery would have expired in all the states as it did in half of them, under the inspiration of universal liberty which came of the Declaration of Independence and the struggle of the Revolution. But the cotton gin, with the aid of slave labor, made cotton cultivation possible on a greater scale; incited ambitions for wealth, aggrandizement and political power, and became an essential from this standpoint to their future prosperity. It held out the promises of enormous gain. It received a representation based upon slave population and for that purpose demanded an extension of the area of slavery. It was the act of the hitherto sleeping giant awakened to the seductive influences of enormous

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wealth, and it had the more alluring temptations of supreme political power. The North also was more or less affected by its commercial relation with the South and especially is this true in the case of important commercial centers. There, everywhere, could be found a decided pro-slavery sentiment, ready then and afterwards to foster and encourage its promotion.

It is interesting to note the effect which commercial relations or political ambitions had, or could have, upon the conscience or the conduct of mankind with reference to this question. One naturally looks upon Massachusetts as for rock-ribbed abolition, and upon Virginia as being for slavery, from the very nature of the situation. To illustrate how far from the truth this can be, let me quote from a speech of Edward Everett in Congress about 1834 or '35:

“Sir,” said he, addressing the speaker, “I am no soldier. My habits and education are very unmilitary. But there is no cause in which I would sooner buckle a knapsack on my back and put a musket on my shoulder, than that of putting down a servile insurrection at the South. The slaves of this country are better clothed and fed than the peasantry of some of the most prosperous states of Europe. The great relation of servitude, in some form or other, with greater or less departure from the theoretic equality of man, is inseparable from our nature. Domestic slavery is not, in my judgment,

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to be set down as an immoral or irreligious relation. It is a condition of life as well as any other, to be judged by morality, religion and International Law."

And then arose John Randolph of Roanoke, a typical Virginian:

"Sir, I envy neither the head nor the heart of that man from the North who rises here to defend slavery on principle."

Abolitionism, meanwhile, was sitting quietly by with folded hands, all organized opposition at an end. Up to 1814 only three pamphlets of any importance were published anywhere affecting anti-slavery and these advocated progressive emancipation or discussed doctrinal or agricultural questions in connection with slavery.

In this crisis of affairs, *aggression* on the one hand, and *apathy* on the other, who should lead a new crusade against the violators of the Temple of Liberty? Who should become another Moses to lead a people out of bondage into freedom?

He came, not out of a kingly court. Not from among the learned, the eloquent, or those of commanding influence, but from the ranks of the humble and the lowly, and with nothing of either physical or educational equipment that would indicate the possibilities of his career.

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Benjamin Lundy was born January 4, 1789, the only son of Joseph and Eliza (Shotwell) Lundy, at Handwick, Sussex County, New Jersey. His parents and most of their connections were members of the society of Friends and came originally from England and Wales. His mother died when he was about five years old. During her life he had been to school and learned to read but little. After his father's second marriage he attended school a few weeks and began to try to write before he was eight years of age. At the age of sixteen he again went to school a short time to learn arithmetic. This was all the schooling he ever had. He writes of himself:

"I had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and was withal very ambitious, in so much that when my father hired men to work on his farm, I labored with them much too hard for my physical frame, in order to convince them, though I was a mere boy, I could do the work of the largest and strongest of them. By this means I partially lost my hearing and otherwise injured myself."

At the age of nineteen, on account of failing health, he went to Wheeling, Virginia, where he remained four years and served an apprenticeship at the saddler's trade and worked at it eighteen months as a journeyman. It was *there* he writes:

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"My faculties were developed, my character made known to myself and the principles that have since guided me in my public labor were formed and fixed."

Of his associates he says:

"They were wild, fashionable youths, clever enough, but fond of frivolous sports."

For himself, he

"Resolved to check any unreasonable propensities before it was too late. He kept in his plain dress, attended the regular meetings of his society (the Quakers) and spent most of his time in reading instructive books."

Consider for a moment the geographical position of Wheeling, his residence in these formative years. Located upon the Ohio River, it was the boundary line of the slave territory over which Lundy passed every week in attendance upon First Day service in a free state. The Ohio River was the highway of the slave traffic at that time, which was enormous and enormously profitable. Engaged in developing the new regions of the west and southwest, Kentucky and Missouri were being rapidly settled and Illinois was a future battle ground to be occupied and entrenched, if possible. Virginia, Maryland and the southern states adjoining were the breeding ground for the western market. Here the slaves

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were collected together, "bunched up" as we would say in cattle phrase to-day. Chained together under the guard of drivers, to prevent an escape into free states adjoining, they were driven to the Ohio River, placed upon boats at some convenient point and floated down to their destination. Wheeling was the greatest thoroughfare in this traffic in human flesh and Benjamin Lundy saw it in all its enormity. Anticipating by a few years the sensation and resolution of Abraham Lincoln at New Orleans, he formed a resolution then and there that became the determined purpose of his life, and from the accomplishment of which he never wavered. He says:

"My heart was deeply touched at the gross abomination; I heard the wail of the captive, I felt his pang of distress, and the iron entered my soul."

The assistant editor of his closing days, Mr. Z. Eastman, was told in 1839 by Mr. Lundy that as far back as 1808 he was led to make a consecration of his life for the deliverance of the slave. That must have been in the first year of his apprenticeship and his impression must have been immediate as well as profound.

Mr. Lundy left Wheeling in 1812 and re-

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turned to Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, where he met his future wife. Remaining there for two years engaged at his trade, he returned to his father's home in New Jersey for a stay of eight or ten months. Refusing his father's offer to engage in business there, he returned to St. Clairsville, Ohio, ten miles west of Wheeling, was married and started a business. That he was successful appears from his own statement:

"I began with no other means but my own hands and a disposition for industry and economy. In a little more than four years, however, I found myself in possession of more than \$3,000 worth of property beyond what was necessary to pay the moderate amount I owed. I had then a loving wife and two beautiful children that it was then a real happiness to possess and cherish. I was at peace with my neighbor and knew not that I had an enemy. I had bought a lot and built myself a comfortable house. All my wants and those of my family were fully supplied. My business was increasing and prosperity seemed to smile upon me."

I have quoted this fully that we might all appreciate the extent and completeness of the sacrifice that was to be made. In that period of our national development upon the frontier very much of future wealth and influence was represented in the fact of a permanent home, a united family, and increasing business. The accumulation of a capital of \$3,000 within four years at

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that time, without assistance, was no mean accomplishment and indicated great business capacity. The man who could do this was capable of great things in any undertaking.

May we take a glance at the *man* himself at that time?

A biographer has said:

“He was slender and slightly under middle size, with light complexion, blue eyes and wavy hair. He was cheerful, unassuming and studious.”

An engraving from a portrait by A. Dickenson, published in 1847, reveals a man with a scholarly, dignified face, a mild eye, clad in conventional garb with high collar and choker; one whose appearance would never indicate his rugged nature or his ability for any heroic struggle which should demand the highest capacity for physical, mental and moral fortitude. His portrait is also included as one of a dozen men cited in Greeley's *American Conflict* as eminent opponents of the slave power; compared with the portraits of Joshua Giddings, William Lloyd Garrison, Garret Smith, Charles Sumner, or Owen Lovejoy, Lundy seems mild, indeed, though not effeminate. A water color portrait, however, owned by Susan Maria (Lundy) Wireman, his daughter, who is also buried at Clear

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Creek Cemetery, has given me a better idea of the real man he was. "Blue eyes and wavy hair" might well describe the man of the engraving I have spoken of. They do not identify the man of the water color portrait. An eye of blue that was bright with the gleam of steel and of fire, an eye that penetrated where it fastened its gaze; scant reddish hair and beard, and a complexion of purest Saxon type gave life and energy and vivacity to the subject which cold black print can never portray; more than all these, there is a certain setting of the jaw which suggests that, which no other portrait contains. Here in this portrait is seen the man to whom so much of heroism, daring and sacrifice has been attributed. Here can be seen the indomitable will, unconquerable spirit and transcendent genius that was necessary to the accomplishment of the work to which he had dedicated himself. The portrait reveals the physical and native resources he possessed. It cannot reveal the added mental and scholarly equipment which his "studious habits with book in hand" had furnished him.

He was now twenty-five years of age, in the midst of the comfort and possibilities he has described. He was now a man with all the responsibilities of a man. What should be his future?

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Up to that time he had taken no active part in anti-slavery agitation, nor, so far as it can be learned, had it ever influenced the slightest act of his life. I have referred to his life at Wheeling, and in his later years he gave utterance to the reason which prompted his future conduct and controlled his entire career. I quote from his paper, *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, at that time printed in Washington, as being the best authority for the reasons that determined him in the change of his entire life. In this journal of November, 1832, he said of Wheeling:

“That was the place where his youthful eye first caught a view of the ‘cursed whip’ and the ‘hellish manacle’—where he first saw the slaves in chains forced along like brutes to the southern markets for human flesh and blood! Then did his young heart bound within his bosom and his heated blood boil in his veins on seeing droves of a dozen or twenty ragged men chained together and driven through the streets bareheaded and barefooted in sun and snow by the remorseless ‘soul sellers’ with horse whips and bludgeons in their hands! It was the frequent repetition of such scenes as these in the town of *Wheeling, Virginia*, that made the impressions on his mind relative to the slave question which have induced him to devote himself to the cause of Universal Emancipation. During the apprenticeship with a respectable mechanic of that place, he was made acquainted with the cruelties and the despotism of slavery as tolerated in this land; and he made

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a solemn vow to *Almighty God* that if favored with health and strength, he would break at least one link of the ponderous chain of oppression when he should become a man."

He had now become a man. The time is now at hand for the fulfillment of his vow, and he says in his autobiography:

"I had lamented the sad condition of the slave ever since I became acquainted with his wrong and suffering, but the question, What can I do? was the continual response to the impulses of my heart. As I enjoyed no peace of mind, I concluded *I must act*, and shortly after my settlement at St. Clairsville, I called a few friends together and unbosomed myself to them. The result was the organization of an anti-slavery association called the '*Union Humanitarian Society*.'"

The first meeting was held at his home and consisted of six persons. In a few months it had grown to nearly five hundred persons, among whom were the most eminent divines, lawyers and citizens of that state.

He also wrote a circular dated Jan. 4, 1816, being his twenty-seventh birthday, which was the first definite announcement of a campaign that ended in the overthrow of slavery. This circular is historic. Its first appearance was in five or six copies in manuscript. At the urgent request of friends and of persons from a distance who met at the yearly meeting in the society of

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Friends at Mt. Pleasant, this paper was printed and circulated on the condition that it should appear with a fictitious signature. This signature was *Philo Justicia*. As an introduction, while urging the inadequacy of stopping at the abolition of the African slave trade, when the seeds of the evil system had been sown in our soil and were springing up and producing increase, he proposed,

First, that a society should be formed whenever a number of persons could be induced to join in them.

Second, that a title should be adopted common to all the societies.

Third, they should all have a uniform constitution, "varying only on account of necessity arising from location."

Fourth, that a correspondence should be kept up between the societies, that they should co-operate in action, that in case of important business they should choose delegates to meet in general convention.

This plan is practically the same in efficient operation twenty years afterwards when it embraced one thousand anti-slavery societies. At the conclusion of the address, the writer stated that he had the subject long in contemplation and that he had now taken it up fully determined for one, never to lay it down while he breathed, or until the end should be obtained.

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This circular, short and simple as it was, is mentioned by Greeley in his *American Conflict* as "containing the germ of the entire anti-slavery movement."

A local newspaper, *The Philanthropist*, had been established at Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, and its columns were open to the discussion of slavery. Lundy became an interested contributor and soon was invited to take part in its editorial work. Soon his articles were upon the editorial page. While he was at work on his saddler's bench, ten miles away, an invitation to become a partner in the business and to remove to Mt. Pleasant was accepted, and he proceeded to close out his business for that purpose. In 1819, for the purposes of a better market for his goods, he took the balance of his stock upon a boat, his apprentices plying their trade on board while he steered the boat for St. Louis. Unable to sell his stock at St. Louis by reason of financial depression, he rented a shop and boarded himself and his boy apprentices. Missouri was at that time in the turmoil and excitement of a great political campaign and was knocking at the door for admission to the Union. Every spare moment was devoted by Lundy, in person and through newspaper articles, in Missouri and Illinois, to expos-

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ing the evils of slavery. He says, "The contest which was long and severe, terminated in our losing the day." * * * * He sold his remaining stock at a ruinous sacrifice and returned home on foot, a journey of seven hundred miles and in the winter season, having been absent a year and ten months.

During his absence, the newspaper had changed hands and was conducted by Elisha Bates, who did not come up to the anti-slavery standards of Lundy. He also learned that Elihu Embree had begun the publication of an anti-slavery paper, *The Emancipator*, at Jonesborough, Tennessee. He removed to Mt. Pleasant and began the publication of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, in January, 1821. The prospectus and first number were published by Elisha Bates. Afterwards the printing was done at Steubenville, Ohio, twenty miles away, Lundy going to and fro on foot, carrying his printed papers on his back. In a few months the subscription list was quite large, but after eight monthly issues, Lundy started for Tennessee to use the Embree press at Jonesborough, Embree having died. It was a journey of eight hundred miles, half on foot and half by water. There, for the first time, he undertook the printer's art and

did the mechanical, as well as editorial, work. After a few months, during which considerable opposition and threats of violence developed, he brought his family to Tennessee and resided there for three years. During this time he attended "The American Convention for the Abolition of Slavery" at Philadelphia, a distance of six hundred miles, going and returning on horse back. He was the first delegate from any part of the country as far south as Tennessee to any anti-slavery meeting. Upon this trip he made the acquaintance of some abolitionists east of the Alleghany mountains. The *Genius of Universal Emancipation* had now obtained a considerable circulation. It was the only anti-slavery paper published in America. He concluded to transfer its publication to one of the Atlantic states to secure a wider influence and increased support. Arranging his business and shouldering his knapsack, he set out for Baltimore in 1824. On this trip he delivered his first public lecture and embraced every opportunity of obtaining an audience; at house raisings, musters, and every sort of assemblies, he urged his cause, and in the State of North Carolina alone, while on this journey, twelve or fourteen anti-slavery societies were organized.

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The first Baltimore number of the *Genius* was issued in October, 1824, being No. 1, of Vol. 4, and in about a year the publication was changed from a monthly to a weekly. Meanwhile, his wife and family had been removed from Tennessee to Baltimore. In 1825 he made his first trip to the Island of Haiti to establish there a number of slaves who had been freed, and arrange with the Island government for any emancipated slaves that might be sent there. Detained longer than he had anticipated, he returned to Baltimore to find his wife dead and his five children scattered among friends. His obituary notice of his wife's death, published in the *Genius*, of June 3, 1826, is a most eloquent and touching tribute to her worth. Only a brief quotation can be made, but it is due to this woman that she be credited with her part in his great work. He said of her:

“Whenever it fell to my lot to be called away from home, she uniformly and cheerfully gave her consent thereto; observing that she could not find a freedom in urging anything as a hindrance to the success of my labor in the cause of philanthropy.”

Five children were left motherless, among them twins a few weeks old, and this man, in face of that fact, said:

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“I collected my children together and placed them with friends in whom I could confide and renewed my vow to devote my energy to the cause of the slave until the nation should be effectually aroused in its behalf. I relinquished any prospect of future enjoyment of an earthly home until that object should be accomplished.”

The publication of the paper was continued at Baltimore, William Swain being added as assistant editor with Elizabeth Chandler, a poet and author of some distinction; both were converts of his lectures and publications, and it is noteworthy that his efforts produced not only converts, but missionaries in his work.

In 1828 a trip was taken to the middle and eastern states for purposes of lectures and subscriptions. At Philadelphia a meeting was called to consider the use of free labor products, the first meeting of the kind ever held in America. This would indicate his intellectual grasp and his conception of the power of a modified boycott, an elaboration of which has become so prominent in the later stages of our national development. It was upon this trip that he met, at Boston, William Lloyd Garrison, who had not yet turned his attention to the slavery question. They met at a boarding house with eight clergymen of various denominations. The ministers all approved

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of the work and became subscribers to the *Genius*. Garrison also expressed approval of his doctrines. He was at that time the editor of the *National Philanthropist*, the first total abstinence sheet in the world. Truly, here was a scene worthy the brush of the artist. This, in a way, accidental meeting, in an obscure boarding house in Boston, between Benjamin Lundy and William Lloyd Garrison—the little deaf Quaker and the near-sighted Baptist who was to become the foremost type of militant warfare in the cause he at that moment espoused. “The Signing of the Compact” and “The Landing of the Mayflower” have been immortalized upon the canvas and form two of our great historic pictures. Yet neither of these events was more significant than the one we mention. Here awakened into vitality the conscience and co-operation of the man who was to assume such prominence in the final overthrow of slavery. Lundy’s word had been good seed and it had fallen upon good ground. The mild Quaker had lighted a flame that was never extinguished. The history of abolitionism shows us two fire-brands, John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison. But Garrison was the first and more significant influence and very likely was responsible for the attitude of the other.

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In November, 1828, Lundy again visited Boston and invited Garrison to assist him in editing the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, but the latter was at that time editing a paper in Vermont from which he could not free himself. Meanwhile the paper was successfully published and free produce stores were opened in Baltimore and Philadelphia where nothing the product of slave labor was handled. The editorial position was full of dangers. A single example will suffice to illustrate them:

“There was in Baltimore a slave-trader by the name of Austin Woolfolk, notorious for the heartless brutality with which he carried on his wretched business. He sent a gang of twenty-nine slaves on a boat to Georgia. When at sea the slaves rose for their liberty, murdered the captain and mate, reached New York City and escaped,—all except one, who was caught and hung. When led to the place of execution, the condemned negro, according to the custom of those days, was allowed to make some remarks expressing his penitence. Woolfolk, who was present, interrupted the unfortunate man with oaths and abusive language and would not desist until compelled to do so by the indignant spectators. An account of this disgusting spectacle was published in the New York Christian Inquirer, and reprinted by Lundy in the “Genius.”

Soon after this, Woolfolk met Lundy near the post office in Baltimore, caught him by the throat, threw him upon the pavement, choked him until he was nearly unconscious, and then stamped on his head and face with the heel of his boot. Woolfolk was

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arrested and tried for assault and battery. The jury found Woolfolk guilty; and the judge, in whose discretion the penalty was, sentenced him to pay a fine of one dollar. The judge said from the bench that Lundy got nothing more than he deserved, and he took the copy of the "Genius" containing the objectionable article and sent it to the grand jury, charging them to indict Lundy for libel, which they refused to do."

In the spring of 1829 another trip was made to Haiti with a small colony of emancipated slaves and leases of land obtained for them on easy terms. Upon his return in September, 1829, Lundy announced in the *Genius* the association of Garrison in its editorship. This move was not a fortunate one. Garrison espoused the cause of Henry Clay against Jackson, while Lundy had no confidence in Clay upon the slavery question. Subscriptions fell off when politics and sectarianism supplanted in any degree the question for which Lundy alone stood. Garrison, moreover, did not possess the gift of using strong language just *outside* the law of libel that Lundy had, and was soon behind grates and bars and obliged to pay a fine, money for which was obtained in New York by Lundy. But Lundy himself was in turn arrested as co-editor and imprisoned for several days. The particulars of this incident are told in the life of Gar-

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ri-son, and of the time he was in jail, which was forty-nine days, he says:

“The sun itself was not more regular day by day during that period in visiting my cell with its cheering light than was my friend Lundy. His sympathy, kindness and attention were all that a brother could show.”

The partnership was a short one. This plan of the two joining to shake the sleepy nation to consciousness had to be abandoned. Garrison went to Boston with the inspiration of a Baltimore jail upon him, most terribly in earnest; an intellectual and moral lion aroused to work in his own way in the path laid out for him. Lundy was left to plod his accustomed way alone. At this point, for the first time, Lundy, in his paper, the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, after regretting the loss of the help of his friend, states his own case, and it were well to perpetuate it here:

“Nine years have nearly elapsed since this work first made its appearance. During that period I have witnessed many vicissitudes in the affairs of life; have experienced something of the fickleness of fortune and a good share of what the world calls hardship and privation.”

Then he tells of the great difficulties he encountered in getting out his monthly paper, his desires to publish it weekly, his hopes of the fu-

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ture, his patience and unflinching determination shown in every line. He goes on:

“I do not wish to speak boastingly of what I have done or essayed to do in advocating the question of African emancipation, and I detest the idea of making a cringing appeal to the public for aid in my undertakings. I am willing to work, and can support myself and family by my own labor. But, after ten years’ struggle to promote the cause to the best of my humble abilities and in every possible manner, it may not be amiss to inform those who take an interest in this publication that I have, within the period above mentioned, sacrificed several thousand dollars of my own hard earnings; have traveled upward of 5,000 miles on foot, and more than 20,000 in other ways; have visited nineteen of the states of this Union, and held more than 200 public meetings, with the view of making known our object, etc., and, in addition to this, have performed two voyages to the West Indies, by which means the liberation of a considerable number of slaves has been effected, and, I hope, the way paved for the enlargement of many more. What effect this work has had in turning the attention of the public to the subject of the abolition of slavery, it would not become me to say. * * * * * There is not another periodical work published by a citizen of the United States, whose conductor dare treat upon the subject of slavery as its nature requires and its importance demands, and, viewing the matter in this light, I shall persevere in my efforts, as usual, while the means of doing it are afforded, or until more efficient advocates of the cause shall make themselves known.”

In resuming control of the paper Lundy announced that the *Geinus* would hereafter treat

exclusively upon the subject of emancipation. The paper had now fallen upon evil days. Subscriptions failed and it was changed from a weekly to a monthly sheet. It soon became necessary for Lundy himself to leave Baltimore and the *Genius* was moved to Washington and that city became the nominal place of its publication. It also became necessary for Lundy to travel to secure subscriptions, leaving the paper in the hands of a temporary editor. A few numbers would be published and then publication cease for lack of funds. Lundy, hearing of this, would prepare manuscript on the road and print the next number where he happened to be. He could secure a printing press at almost any point. The type he found it more convenient to carry with him, possibly upon his back.

The founding of Garrison's *Liberator* in Massachusetts, and the breaking out of the "Nat Turner Rebellion" in Virginia, hastened the failure of the *Genius*. The one, although working along the same lines, was necessarily to some extent a rival, and the Turner outbreak was fatal to all abolition societies of the south which furnished many subscribers. The story of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* is now shortly told. Removed to Washington in

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1830, it was printed there until 1834, sometimes consecutively for months, when it made its last removal to Philadelphia, expiring there in 1838 amid the flames of Pennsylvania Hall, which was burned by a mob in June of that year.

Just a word as to its appearance. I quote from the words of Mr. Z. Eastman, who was with Lundy at Lowell, Illinois, at the time of his death, in the capacity of printer and assistant editor:

“I well remember the editorial, ‘Vignette.’ It seemed to have been quite a pet of Mr. Lundy’s. I think it was of his own designing. It was not quite clear to me what truth was to be inferred from it. Mr. Lundy once explained it minutely. It represented a scene in a garden. There was in the back ground a sort of miniature square tower with a seat at the bottom. There was nothing in this country like it. Over it were trailing vines. Nearby, dragging a chain and holding a spade in hand, was a white man with depressed appearance. By his side stands a man, possibly putting some question to the slave held by the chain. He looks like a philosopher or Doctor of Divinity, it is impossible to tell which. He is evidently inquiring of this white slave ‘Why is this?’ It was not a strange question if our own color were in that condition. Mr. Lundy would have had it asked, even of the black man also doomed to drag the ball and chain. Mr. Lundy’s paper, besides that piercing motto ‘*Justicia fiat, ruat coelum,*’ also carried on its front this motto, ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with cer-

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tain inalienable rights, in which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' ”

The historical value of Lundy's paper, beginning in 1821 and practically ending in 1830-34, can hardly be estimated. It is the repository of all plans for the abolition of slavery, of all laws, opinions, arguments, essays, speeches, poems, views, statistics, constitutions of societies, manumissions, congressional proceedings, book notices, pamphlets, colonization efforts, political movements, in short, it included everything that could throw light upon or affected the question of slavery here or elsewhere. It had taken part in the historic campaign of 1824 in Illinois, where an attempt was made to fasten slavery upon this state, and was a factor in what was, everything considered, the hardest fought political campaign ever waged in Illinois. Speaking of this campaign through newspaper and pamphlets widely disseminated, I have before me a pamphlet called "*Impartial Appeal to the Reason, Justice and Patriotism of the People of Illinois and the Injurious Effects of Slave Labor.*" This little brochure, published anonymously in Philadelphia and used in the Illinois campaign, bears every token of being the work of Benjamin Lundy. It applies to the economic side of the

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question and repeats many arguments, purely his, found elsewhere. It is noteworthy as bearing upon our subject that it was reprinted in London, and used in connection with the struggle for the abolishment of slavery in the West Indies, and I found the little book in London. So we may well claim that this humble Quaker contributed also to that work in no small degree.

Time forbids to speak of the literary character of the *Genius*, its trenchant English, modes of emphasis and telling invective. With but the scanty preparation spoken of at the outset, Lundy became a great master of English in both style and expression, nor was he lacking in sentiment and poetry. Let me quote a single verse, being one of a number sent his sister after informing her of the birth of his second daughter and their decision to call her Elizabeth:

“Here let me pause, the Muse in accent clear
Repeats the name that memory holds most dear,
My mother, it was thine—blest spirit see
Thy son, thy only son, remembers thee.”

Leaving for a time his journalistic work, permit me to call your attention to another phase of his many sided plans for abolition. I have suggested the two trips to Haiti, each time with a number of slaves that he located there. Lundy

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was unique as an abolitionist in this. He was willing to do for the time being the *best* that *could* be done. Garrison had the one idea of immediate emancipation, so had Goodell. Lundy possessed that idea with equal fervidness, but pending its success wished to have *something* done and that without delay. With this thought in mind he sought to colonize emancipated slaves and free blacks upon territory contiguous to the United States, and upon lands which were not only to provide for them a home, and comply with some state laws as to voluntary emancipation, but would furnish a concrete illustration of the safety and profitableness of the "Emancipation on the Soil" theory. With this in mind he made two journeys to Texas, then a part of Mexico, the first in 1830-31, beginning in the winter. A large portion of a biography published by his children in 1847 is taken up with the account of these trips. He says of them, "My labors were most arduous." The story is one of poverty, privation and danger; at times in disguise; cholera raging everywhere; working at his trade to get the means for a scanty livelihood; when this did not offer, in making suspenders and shot pouches for those who would buy. The purpose of this trip was to establish a set-

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tlement of colored people in Texas with the view of the cultivation of sugar, cotton and rice by free labor. The first trip lasted eighteen months and involved much diplomacy with the Mexican Government to obtain the land, but owing to disturbing conditions was without avail and he returned home in 1833. In May, 1834, he again started on a similar errand, this time not disguising his name, and several times nearly lost his life. In October of that year sorry times certainly were upon him. His notes in his journal of October 7th show that he had spent his last cent for provisions and "was reading the 'Letters of Junius' to beguile his thoughts." On the 15th of October he writes: "I must move in some direction shortly even if I must as a last resort, fast, beg or starve." His narrative as a whole shows close habits of observation, and unbounded resource and diplomacy in approaching the authorities seeking the grant of land. In this quest he was successful and obtained from the Government of Taumaulipas a grant of 138,000 acres of land, conditioned upon introducing two hundred and fifty settlers with their families. This grant, however, came to naught, by reason of the revolution in Texas which followed, and the years of privation and absence went for noth-

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ing. It did accomplish, however, in another way a great and telling result.

Better than any other American, Lundy had become acquainted with the Texan country. He knew its extent and the number and kind of its inhabitants and it was he who furnished to John Quincy Adams the facts upon which the sturdy fight was made in the United States Congress against the admission of Texas, and the subsequent acts that led to the war with Mexico. It is not a part of our theme to discuss what part in this war with Mexico the question of slavery played, but this may be said, that no one person did more to furnish the opponents of slavery with weapons against the admission of Texas or the war with Mexico, than he.

A pamphlet issued in 1836, of sixty-four double columns printed in small type, reveals him in the fullness of his intellectual activity and development. It was entitled, "*War in Texas, a Review of Facts and Circumstances, Showing that this Contest is a Crusade against Mexico, Set on Foot and Supported by Slave Holders, Land Speculators, etc., in Order to Re-establish, Re-extend and Perpetuate the System of Slavery and Slave Trade.*" It was signed by "A Citizen of the United States." This

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pamphlet is a masterly review of the situation from the standpoint of those opposed to the acquisition of Texas to become a part of the United States. It is a scathing arraignment of all engaged either in the conquest of Texas or its admission to the Union; brims with quotations from southern journals, and southern speeches to make clear his claim of conspiracy, all presented in a forceful and convincing way; it furnished to John Quincy Adams the material upon which he based his opposition in Congress to the admission of Texas as a state, and did no other writing of his exist, this pamphlet would distinguish Mr. Lundy not only as a consecrated and determined missionary, but as a master of polemic literature, inferior to none of his day. The struggle was not successful; the enemy was too strong and too well intrenched, but the admission of Texas was delayed for years thereby, and opportunity given to strengthen the abolition forces against the greater conflict now inevitable and almost in sight. May I place upon your records the concluding paragraphs of this great pamphlet which I do not find to have been quoted elsewhere:

“Our countrymen in fighting for the Union of Texas with the United States will be fighting for that

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which at no distant day will inevitably *dissolve the Union*. The slave states having the eligible addition to their land of bondage, will ere long cut asunder the Federal tie and *confederate* a new and slave holding Republic in opposition to the whole free Republic of the north. Thus early will be fulfilled the prediction of the old politicians of Europe that our Union could not remain one century entire; and then also will the maxim be exemplified in history that liberty and slavery cannot long inhabit the same soil.

Citizens of the free states: Are you prepared to sanction the acts of such freebooters and usurpers? Nay more: Are you willing to be *made the instruments* of these wanton aggressors, in effecting their unholy purposes, and thus not only excite the sympathizing maledictions of other human powers, but also invoke the awful judgments of Heaven against you? Some of our wisest statesmen have spoken out, in condemnation of their deeds; and the patriotic conductors of the press are likewise beginning to awaken the public attention to them.

You see that they are now fully resolved to make a speedy application to Congress, for the incorporation of the government which they have thus assumed into the confederation of the United States. This will be attempted the very moment that an opportunity is presented. *People of the north! Will you permit it?* Will you sanction the abominable outrage; involve yourselves in the deep criminality, and perhaps the horrors of war, *for the establishment of slavery in a land of freedom*; and thus put your necks and the necks of your posterity under the feet of the domineering tyrants of the South, for centuries to come? The great moral and political campaign is now fairly opened. Your government has fully espoused the cause of these land-pirates

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and free-booters. Can you still remain silent, and thus lend your sanction to the unparalleled and Heaven-daring usurpation? With deep anxiety, I await your response; and trust it will come in the loudest tones of a thundering *Negative*, resounding o'er your granite mountains, and echoing through every valley north of 'Mason and Dixon's Line.'

You have been warned, again and again, of the deep machinations, and the wicked aggressive policy of this despotic "*Slave-holding Party*." I have unfolded its marauding designs, and pointed out its varied plans and movements. You would not listen to these earnest entreaties and admonitions. You have slumbered in the arms of political harlots, until they have nearly shorn you of your locks, and bound you with the bloody cords prepared by the Philistine horde of tyrannical desperadoes. Arise! *Arise quickly!* and burst those bands, or your doom, with that of your posterity, is sealed perhaps forever."

Let me call especial attention to the prophecy of a "dissolution of the Union" and the *confederation* of a new and slave holding Republic. I know of no earlier prophecy and it is noteworthy that when formed, it was called the *confederacy*.

I have gathered the story of this man largely from the diary he kept. He seeks there to prepare for himself no page in history. It is the simple story of resolve, effort and accomplishment. But he has a permanent place in history and may I be allowed to record a few brief extracts from various tributes to him?

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“Any one who will examine John Quincy Adams’ speech on Texas, in 1838, will see that he was only seconding the full and able exposure of the Texas plot, prepared by Benjamin Lundy, to one of whose pamphlets Dr. Channing in his ‘Letter to Henry Clay’ has confessed his obligation. Every one acquainted with those years will allow that the North owes its earliest knowledge and first awakening on that subject to Mr. Lundy who made long journeys and devoted years to the investigation. His (Lundy’s) labors have this attestation that they quickened the zeal and strengthened the hands of such men as Adams and Channing. I have been told that Mr. Lundy prepared a brief for Mr. Adams and furnished him the materials for his ‘Speech on Texas.’”
—*Speech of Wendell Phillips, Boston, Jan. 27, 1853.*

“The immediate precursor and in a certain sense the founder of abolitionism was Benjamin Lundy, a Quaker, born in New Jersey * * * * * In 1821 he began to publish the ‘Genius of Universal Emancipation,’ which is to be considered the first abolition organ * * * * * The Nineteenth Century can scarcely point to another instance in which the commandment of Christ to ‘leave all things and follow Him’ was so literally construed * * * * *”
—*Von Holst’s History of the United States, Vol. 2, Pages 81-82.*

“Nor is that pioneer of freedom, Benjamin Lundy, to be forgotten. It was his lot to struggle for years almost alone, a solitary voice crying in the wilderness; poor, unaided, yet never despairing, traversing the Island of Haiti, wasting with disease in New Orleans, hunted by Texan banditti, wandering on foot among the mountains of East Tennessee and along the Ozark Hills, beaten down and trampled on by Baltimore slave dealers; yet amidst all, faithful to

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his one great purpose, the emancipation of the slaves and the protection of the free people of color. To him we owe under Providence the enlistment of William Lloyd Garrison in the service which he has so nobly performed."

—*Letter of John G. Whittier, dated Amesbury, Massachusetts, March, 1874.*

"I trust that the memory and labors of Benjamin Lundy will be especially remembered and honored at this reunion gathering. To him I owe my connection with the cause of emancipation, as he was the first to call my attention to it, and by his pressing invitation to me to join him at printing and editing the 'Genius of Universal Emancipation' at Baltimore, he shaped my destiny for the remainder of my life."

—*Letter of William Lloyd Garrison to Eastman, March, 1874.*

More than five pages of Greeley's *American Conflict* are devoted to the life and service of Mr. Lundy and he concludes with these fitting words:

"Thus closed the record of one of the most heroic, devoted, unselfish lives that has ever been lived on this continent."

—*The American Conflict, pages 111-115.*

Mr. Garrison writes of Mr. Lundy in the *Journal of the Times*, Burlington, Vermont, Dec. 12, 1828:

"Instead of being able to withstand the tide of public opinion, it would seem at first doubtful whether he could sustain a temporary conflict with the

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winds of Heaven. And yet, he has explored nineteen states out of the twenty-four, from the Green Mountains of Vermont to the banks of the Mississippi, multiplying anti-slavery societies in every quarter, putting every petition in motion relative to the extinction of slavery in the District of Columbia, everywhere awakening the slumbering sympathies of the people and beginning a work, the completion of which will be the salvation of his country. His heart is of gigantic size. Every inch of him is alive with power. He combines the meekness of Howard and the boldness of Luther. No reformer was ever more devoted, zealous, persevering or sanguine. He has fought single-handed against a host without missing a blow, or faltering a moment, but his forces are rapidly gathering and he will yet save our land. It should be mentioned, too, that he has sacrificed several thousand dollars in this holy cause, accumulated by unceasing industry. Yet he makes no public appeal, but goes forward in the quietude and resolution of his spirit, husbanding his little resources from town to town and from state to state. He said to me some months ago, 'I would not exchange my circumstances with any person on earth if I thereby must relinquish the cause in which I am enlisted.' Within a few months he has traveled 2,400 miles, of which upwards of 1,600 have been on foot, during which time he has held nearly 500 public meetings. Rivers and mountains vanish in his path. Midnight finds him on his solitary way over an unfrequented road. The sun is anticipated in his rising. Never was a moral sublimity better illustrated."

But I must hasten to the conclusion of this eventful life. He had, following the assassination of Lovejoy, determined to move to Illinois

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and print an abolition paper here if it led to a bloody grave. His little property consisting of books, papers and Quaker clothing, and a complete file of his *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, were, preparatory to his departure, stored in "Pennsylvania Hall," a building erected for the cause of freedom at Philadelphia. On May 17, 1838, it was destroyed by the torch of a mob and all of his property, with the brain work of twenty years, went up in flames.

In July he started for Illinois and planned to re-establish the *Genius* here. His relatives lived at Magnolia, in Putnam County, and he selected Hennepin, the county seat, as his place of publication. The paper was dated at Hennepin, but printed at Lowell, where some friends had purchased an old press and worn out type. Lowell was then a city of the future, with a large stone mill in process of erection, with city lots to sell and some to give away. Now scarce a vestige remains of the place. The paper was mailed at Vermillionville, across the Vermillion River, and not far away. A building 12 feet square was the printing office and a two-room house just behind was the dwelling. The twins, now twelve years old, were with him and his daughter, Esther, his little housekeeper. In the

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spring of 1839 three or four issues were printed. John Lovejoy, a brother of the martyr, came to his assistance as a helper, but he was not a printer. In the spring of 1839 Mr. Z. Eastman, a printer, joined him and may I use his words in describing the end:

“We all worked in that little office for a few weeks. Lundy seemed very happy. He had some confidential talk with me, when I told him it would become necessary for me soon to return to the East. He spoke of dividing with me his town-lots in Lowell, and of giving me a share of the broad prairie on which he had squatted; but the proposition did not seem flattering. He was taken ill a day or two after; he wrote a sentence as an apology for lack of editorial, in which he said, ‘We shall soon be better.’ He went to his bed at the tavern the next day, and the day following, about 11 o’clock at night, being told by the physician that he was near his end, stated that he felt perfectly easy, and in a few moments fell into a sweet sleep, that of a child pillowed upon its mother’s bosom; but it was his last sleep. I saw that peaceful death. I wrote the obituary notice that appeared in the same paper with his last editorial words, in which he said he should soon be better. His friends, without display, in the simple, plain style of their religious faith, carried him away, for burial. I suppose no colored man in this world knows where they laid him.”

The last statement is not true certainly at this day. Last summer my wife and I drove to the little cemetery in a car driven by a negro chauffeur. We stood at the grave of Lundy and

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it occurred to us that it would be a matter of interest to the colored man to see the grave of the man who struck the first blow for the freedom of his race. We called him to the spot and told him in a few words of the man who lay buried there. I have spoken of the wealth of myrtle upon the grave, and I saw the young negro quietly place some sprigs of it in his purse. I asked him what he wanted to do with them. He replied that he wanted to send them to his sister at Tuskegee. Then I thought, Oh that the man who lay so quietly there could see this act, and could know that from his grave, perhaps from his very bones, had sprung the tokens that carried a brother's message to the negro in his better estate, with the opportunities at hand for which he had lived and suffered and died. Surely if that message wrought its perfect work, it would tell to that people, to whom his life had opened such opportunity, of the heroic self-sacrifice that had made freedom and opportunity possible to them.

He, like Moses, did not live to enter the promised land, but the people for whom he labored have entered into it.

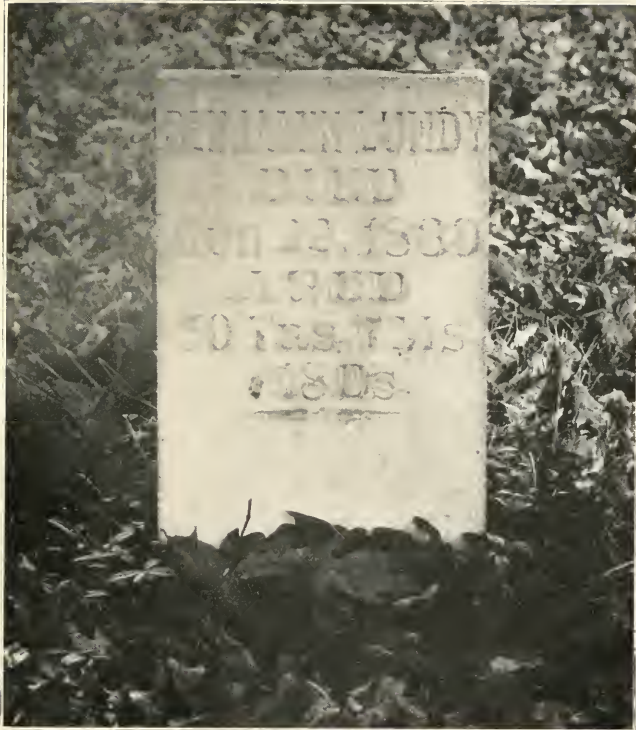
May I not fittingly close this address by quoting the last verse of Mrs. Alexander's poem with which I began:

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“O lonely tomb in Moab’s land!
O dark Beth-peor’s hill!
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still.
God hath His mysteries of grace,—
Ways that we cannot tell;
He hides them deep, like the secret sleep
Of him He loved so well.”

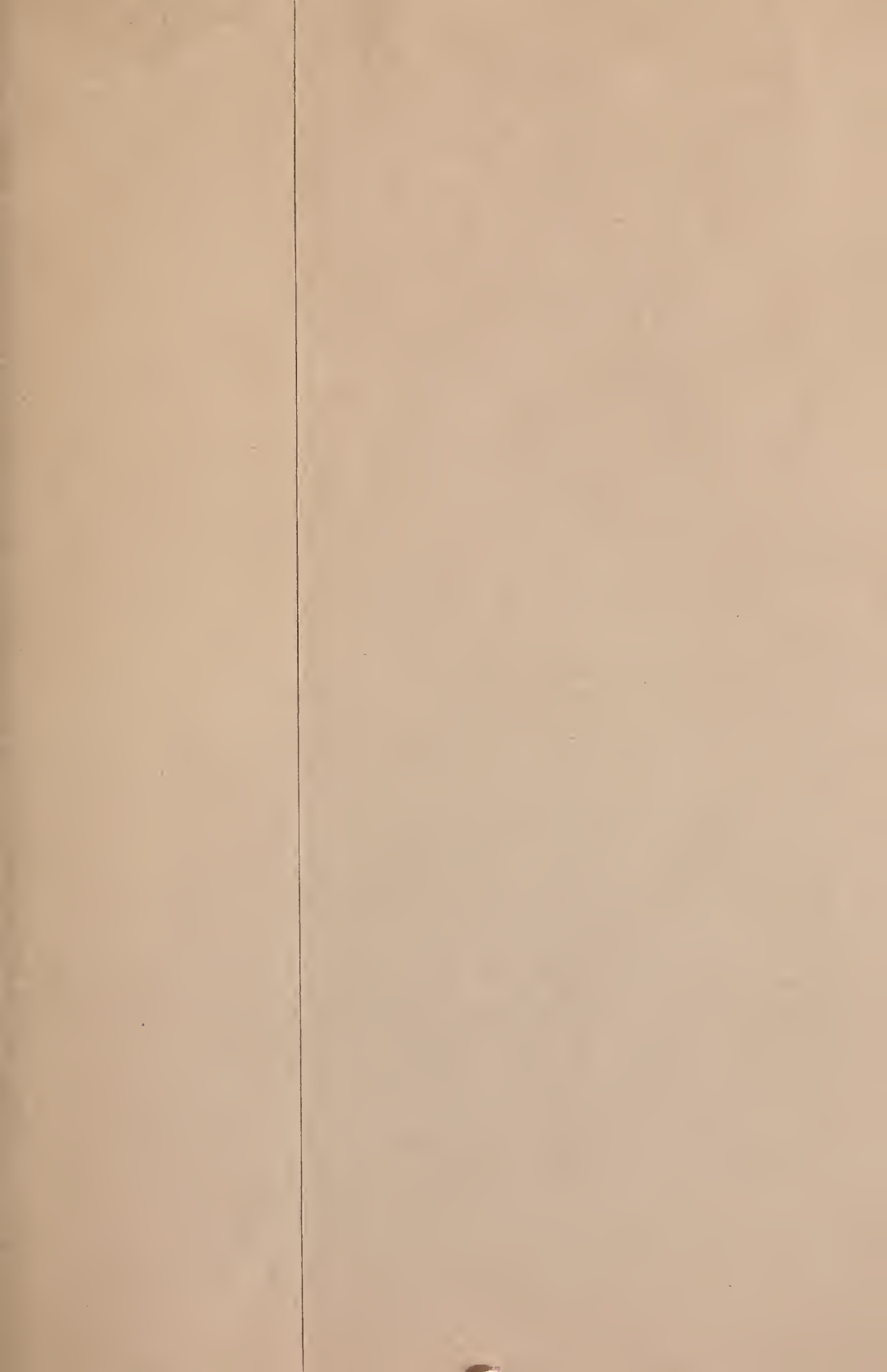
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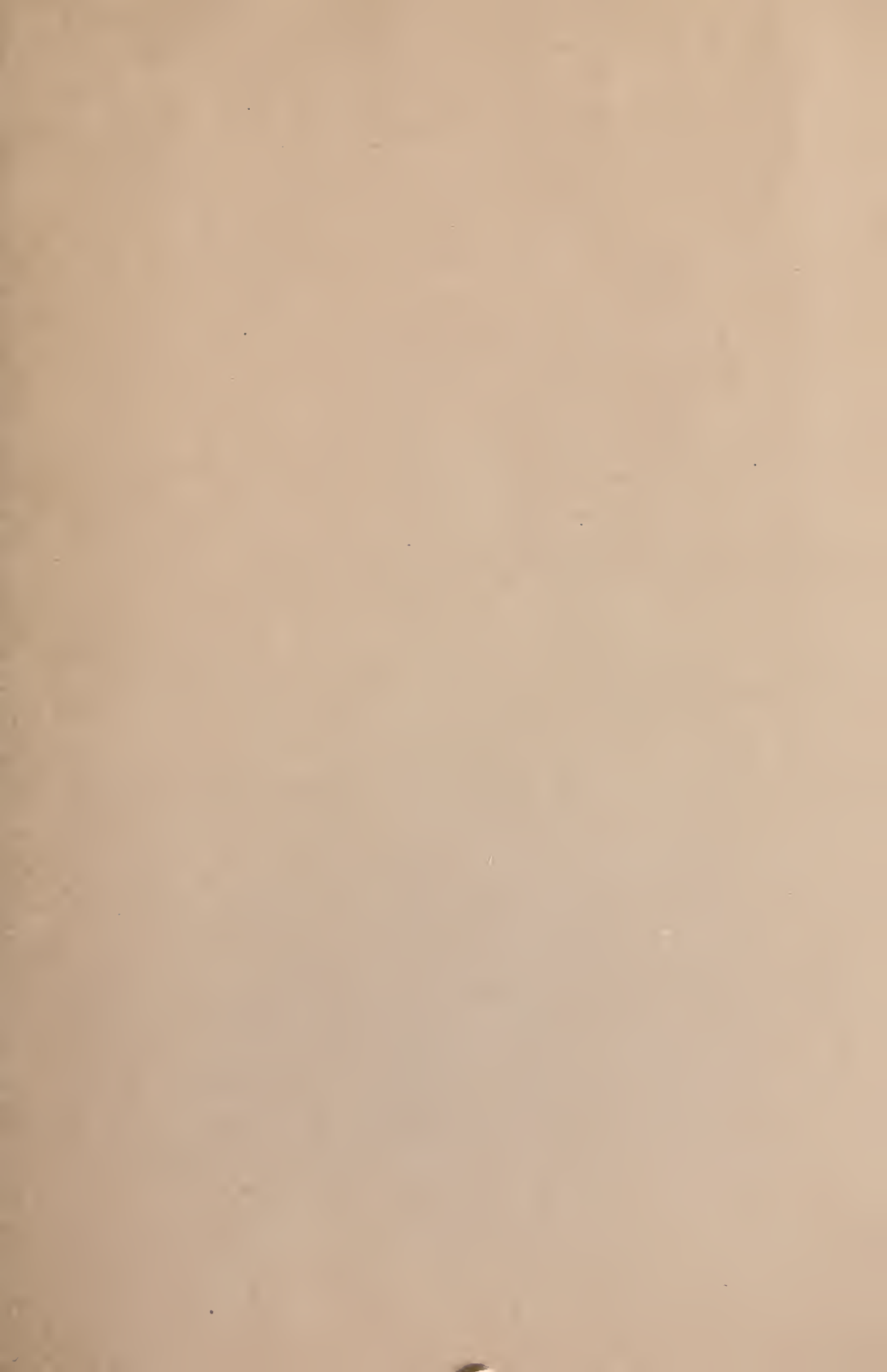
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BENJAMIN LINDY
DIED
MAY 23. 1830
AGED
50 YRS. 7 MS.
1805.













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